

RAGGED MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION GAINS NEW MOMENTUM WITH YEAR-END PURCHASE

(ROCKPORT)--Coastal Mountains Land Trust closed out a successful year with the purchase of a 41-acre parcel on Ragged Mountain on December 30. The acquisition is the first of a four-part purchase agreement with landowners John and Rhonda Hart that will ultimately protect more than 200 acres on the northwest shoulder of the mountain. With this latest addition, the Land Trust has now conserved almost 8,900 acres in the western Penobscot Bay region, including more than 1,300 acres on Bald and Ragged Mountains.

Thanks to the cooperation and conservation vision of the Harts, the Land Trust will purchase the remaining three portions of the Hart property over the next two years, giving the organization time to raise the necessary funds. Two of those three parcels, totaling an additional 104 acres, will be purchased in June and December 2011 respectively. The December 2010 acquisition was made possible by the generosity of community supporters, as well as grant support from the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, Fields Pond Foundation, NLT Foundation, Cascade Foundation, Thendara Foundation, and the Overbrook Foundation.

"We're extremely grateful for the conservation work that Coastal Mountains Land Trust does in our beautiful region," explained John and Rhonda Hart. "We absolutely trust their good land stewardship and will continue to support their goals for the future."

Once all four parcels have been acquired, the Hart Tract of the Ragged Mountain Preserve will feature diverse and scenic wildlife habitats of fields, forests, and exposed ledges that abut both the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area and land previously conserved by the Land Trust. The property also boasts incredible views from the ridgeline, including the highest section of the Georges Highland Path, and contains a portion of the watershed of the community drinking water supply.

This property is a keystone piece within the larger framework of the Bald and Ragged Mountains Campaign, a community conservation effort that the Land Trust has been engaged in for the past eight years. It embodies all the core values and public benefits of the Campaign, as well as being instrumental to the Land Trust's ongoing "Gateway to the Mountains" trail collaboration with the Town of Camden, securing a crucial link for the shared vision of a future "round-the-mountain" trail that will expand public, multi-use trails originating from the Camden Snow Bowl.

Galen Todd, Land Trust Board President, affirmed, "Our recent purchase of the first 41 acres of the Hart property on Ragged Mountain is a huge step forward for the Land Trust, the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area, and our community as a whole. This initiative will have direct positive environmental and economic impact, helping to preserve our quality of place and greatly enhancing the recreational opportunities for all of us to enjoy."

This year Coastal Mountains Land Trust celebrates its 25th anniversary, continuing its work to permanently conserve land to benefit the natural and human communities of western Penobscot Bay.